

1982 -- REVIEW:

Although this year, "Les Voyageurs" cannot boast about the number of campers we had, we can boast about the things that did happen with the small number who were there.

For the second year running, all the "Les Voyageurs" trips have been fun, challenging and safe.

All the campers were pleased with their trips and most felt they had accomplished something they never felt they could. My personal feeling is that not only did the campers go home feeling that they had "made it" through a one hundred and twenty five (125) mile canoe trip, but also that they had learned a lot more than how to "start a fire in the rain". I also feel that they all learned more about themselves and how to work with others as a team.

Due to the fact that we put a lot of effort into teaching on our canoe trips, it was especially gratifying to see such keen, responsive campers. Most important of all was the fact that all our canoe trips were safe. This we feel was due to the way in which we handled our groups and a lot of luck. We took no unnecessary chances or challenges which we thought would endanger any member of our group.

What we taught our campers is that you can still have a challenging experience in the bush without taking unnecessary risks with the safety of the group.

I am often told by people (even YMCA staff) that I must enjoy a wonderful summer, how canoe trips must be so great, am able to swim anytime, get a suntan and generally take it easy all summer. When they hear how much planning and preparations alone are needed to completely prepare seven campers for a successful trek through one hundred and twenty five miles of swamp, grown over portages, large lakes and river systems, they realize that ten hours a day for twelve days straight is a big responsibility.

It involves not only travelling on nice sunny days, but rainy days, days when the black flies and deer flies are a real problem. The work is hard and when a day's paddle is finished you're looking at working around the campsite to set up for the night. Often it takes a lot of resourcefulness to motivate the campers as well as myself through difficult parts of a trip.

The question is "then why do it?" To me it is a chance to teach young people new skills with nature as my classroom. It gives them a chance to learn more about themselves and how they function in a co-ed group, and an opportunity to test newly acquired physical skills. To me, it is worth all the hardships on any trip.

Tripping Area:

Each year there seems to be more and more people and garbage in the areas where we have always tripped. There are still some beautiful areas that are clean and somewhat isolated in the Park, but the fees are getting so high that we have been taking most of our trips north east of the Park.

It has been suggested, in past Directors' reports, (Paul Mongraw in 1974 and Bob Woodhouse in 1978) that we start looking elsewhere to trip because of people and garbage. I think that this is important and we should look around for new extended tripping routes, but not in 1983. Next year should be used to get the camp on its feet.

Staff:

In the past two years I have worked with Bill Partridge. I have yet to meet anyone his age (17) who is more able in the bush. He is very much a self-starter and I see no reason why he shouldn't run his own canoe trips next summer. I recommend him very highly.

Any other staff hired should be (as in past years) the best trained and most experienced with both young people and with canoe trips. They are very hard to find but well worth the effort.

Equipment:

It is all in good shape and is in the boxes in the trip shed beside the farm house. There should be enough equipment to take out three - six man trips. As there has only been one trip out at a time in the past two years, much of the equipment has gone unused. Hopefully this will change in 1983.

Whoever is directing Les Voyageurs should go up to camp in May and air out the equipment. As every tripper has their own style, next year's Director may want to add to the existing inventory.

In terms of paddles, the Voyageurs should be advised at parent's night in May, to buy them in the City. Kamp Kanawana's supply is often low and generally of poor quality.

At least 1200 (good quality) baggies must be bought before camp. This supply would last the summer and save a lot of time if bought before camp.

Four more metal first aid kits should be purchased. Two should go on each trip, one with bandages, and one with pills, tape, etc.

More Chicago screws. They can be bought downstairs at Pascals on Ste., Catherine St.

Some of the pots need repair, and there is probably only enough for two trips.

There are five tents and tarps and three of these need repair before they go out.

Bob Woodhouse (Director, 1978-79) put together a fantastic map of all the Voyageur routes used in the past ten years. It is in the equipment box at the farm house. As it has taken many long hours of work to put this map together, and is an extremely useful tool, it must be taken care of. A new set of maps should be bought before camp.

Food:

The food that I use on trips is very simple: porridge, cream of wheat for breakfast, dried fruit and canned meat and fish for lunch, spaghetti, chile, beans, freeze-dried foods, etc., for suppers.

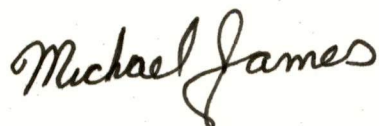
All of our food was good and very simple to prepare, all that had to be added was care. In taking time and energy making the meals all the campers were satisfied and I had no problems.

For the last two years, the campers have arrived the morning before their long trip up to the Park. . This leads to a long slow day without much to do. Next year they should arrive no sooner than late afternoon. The same situation occurs when they return to Kamp Kanawana, staying at the farm house overnight and returning to the city at 3:30 PM the following day. It is a letdown after the trip.

The Director of Les Voyageurs earned \$1,000. in 1970. In 1982, as Director, I made \$1,400. and I think it is about time the YMCA took a look at this.

Camper parents night should be compulsory for all. Last summer I gave ten days notice and no parents showed up. The night should be scheduled for May to ensure full attendance.

Thanks to Jim Pelton, Bob Woodhouse, Yves St.Pierre, and special thanks to Olga Hall for her help and patience.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael James".

MICHAEL JAMES

DIRECTOR

LES VOYAGEURS DE LA VERANDRYE 1982

LES VOYAGEURS

"Les Voyageurs" is one of the few camps in North America that takes young people on extended canoe trips. The trips are well planned and safe. The food is better than ever, and with a little effort you can eat as well and as much as in any camp dining hall I have ever been in. The country is fantastic and always changing. Any one trip offers all the different kinds of terrain you will see in North Eastern North America. Campers have a chance to see dozens of mammals and birds. The fishing is great and any keen fisherman in our group has always gotten more than his fair share of pike and dore. The water and air is as clean as any camper will ever experience. The learning and exercising of new skills is part of everyday as is the bulding of relationships with new found friends. Many campers and staff who have shared just one two or three week canoe trip have remained friends for life.

Why is it then that we have only attracted eleven campers in 1982 and seventeen campers in 1981?

After asking myself this question over and over again, I submit the following:

Lets look at some history.-

- 1961** Roger Wilson had a voyageur folder made up by March 15th of that year. Three thousand (3,000) copies were sent out to all ex-voyageurs, senior K.K. campers, and all YMCA branches around the city.
- 1963** Les Voyageurs had a new brochure but in the Directors' Report of that year, the first recommendation was that there should be more active and earlier promotion.
- 1965** Les Voyageurs were on pages six (6) and seven (7) of the Montreal Y.M.C.A. Camping brochure.
- 1967** Les Voyageurs were on page nine (9) of the Kamp Kanawana brochure.
- 1968** The Directors' Report states that in his view, "the advertising is pretty bad", and makes some suggestions on how to improve it.
- 1969** The Directors' Report again asks for more effective advertising for the camp.
- 1970** The Director, in his final report, is very much against moving the base camp from the "Park" to Kamp Kanawana (the farm house). He points out the camp will loose much of its independance and identity. He also suggests that we try putting ads in newspapers in some large American cities.

In that year (1970) half the Directors' Report was dedicated to suggestions for improvement and maintenance of the independance of Les Voyageurs.

1972 Les Voyageurs moved to Kamp Kanawana.

1974 The Directors' Report points out the negative effects on Les Voyageurs due to the new base of operation out of the farm house at Kamp Kanawana.

1978 Directors' Report asks for some form of outreach advertising, pointing out that without this, registration will fall off.

1979 Director points out that although there were ads in two newspapers, the registration was still down. He did make some suggestions, T-shirts, and a story in the Canadian Section of the Saturday newspaper.

1982 Les Voyageurs is now on page five (5), twelve (12), and thirteen (13) of the YMCA Kamp Kanawana brochure.

What I am trying to point out is that over the years, many very dedicated people who worked for "Les Voyageurs" took time to make suggestions for improvement on camp registration. Unfortunately, it appears that for the most part these suggestions fell upon deaf ears.

We have to understand that unlike most other camps, Les Voyageurs has only one year campers and because of this more time must be spent in trying to "sell" the camp. For example, this year I, along with some of the other K.K. staff posted two hundred posters for Les Voyageurs in May. Unfortunately we later found that these posters should have been posted three months earlier.

Les Voyageurs can work and it is very worthwhile. Personally I think it would be a sin if our camp were to be absorbed by Kamp Kanawana, Les Voyageurs is a different camp than Kanawana and would therefore lose its identity. Les Voyageurs should be dealt as separate by the "Y". A little time, effort and money spent in January and February would boost registration for next summer although in viewing reports this has not been done.

Some personal suggestions and some from past years would be:

- A story on page three (3) of the Gazette in Ted Blackman or Nick Auf Der Maur's column.
- A spot on McGowan's Montreal
- Ads in the Sunday Camps section of the Sunday, New York Times
- T-shirts
- Posters - 1,000 posted before April.

In order for "Les Voyageurs" to be the camp it should be, we have to sell. It is a quality project and the more who know about it the better.

Michael James OCT. 1982